

THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 13

The newsletter for people who care about Boston

May-June 1994

Welcome to the Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise, public information on construction projects, planning, and whatever else affects life in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*! Anthony Casendino, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.



The Boston Conference

Part II of The Boston Conference: Shaping the Accessible Region, a gathering of "experts" on transportation and urban development, will take place on May 18 at the Kennedy Library. The invited "experts" will announce their findings to the primarily hand-picked audience. The Boston Globe reported that "a number of issues were raised" at Part I of the conference.



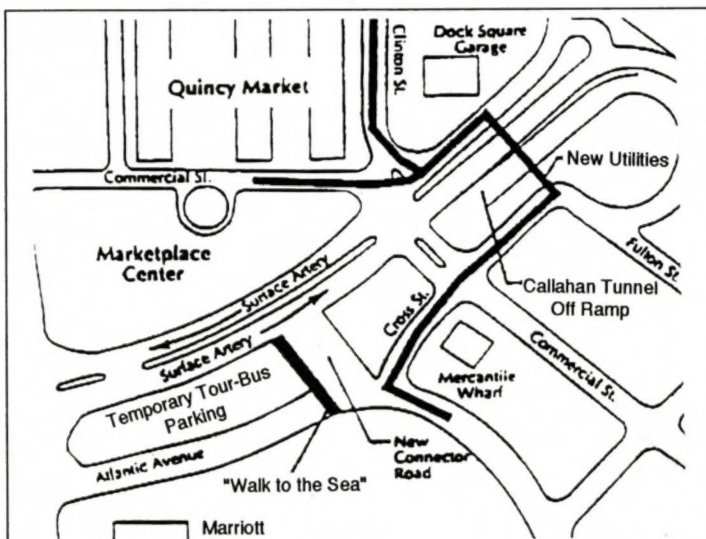
Downtown Utility Relocations

A major utility relocation project (C14C2) has started, building new utility lines (electricity, gas, telephone, water, sewer, steam and cable TV) between the Quincy Market tourist area and the residential North End.

The project involves building a utility corridor across the Surface Artery near Fulton Street and along both sides of the Central Artery between Quincy Market and the Callahan Tunnel entrance. Three parallel slurry walls 100 feet deep will be built in the utility corridors and will later be part of the depressed Central Artery. Large settling tanks for the slurry will be built behind the North End nursing home.

Utility conduits will be pipejacked underground between the Dock Square garage and Fulton Street and the existing off ramp from the existing Central Artery to the Callahan Tunnel will be rebuilt to make it a bridge and not an earth-supported structure.

In addition to needing to reroute traffic on the Surface Artery during construction of the slurry walls, the Walk to the Sea will be relocated. By moving the Walk to the Sea farther north, a temporary bus-parking area for 13 tour buses will be established on the open land next to Atlantic Avenue opposite the Marriott Hotel.



Waterfront utility relocation and temporary tour-bus parking, Central Artery project. Source: Central Artery/Tunnel project

MBTA Blue Line Station Modernization Project

The six-year, six-mile project will rebuild 11 MBTA Blue Line stations, lengthening all platforms to accommodate six-car trains and generally upgrading deteriorated stations. Three construction phases will divide the work. The project cost is \$467 million, a combination of federal and state funds.

- **Wonderland**—station upgrade to be completed late 1995
- **Revere Beach**—station upgrade to be completed late 1995
- **Beachmont**—station upgrade and viaduct reconstruction; to be completed April 1996
- **Suffolk Downs**—station upgrade to be completed April 1995
- **Orient Heights**—station will be the end of the line during shuttle-bus program; station upgrade to be completed mid-1998
- **Wood Island**—tied to the Central Artery/Tunnel project and Massport plans, the station will be rebuilt to serve as a temporary Airport station. To be completed in 1995.
- **Airport**—tied to the Central Artery/Tunnel project and Massport plans, station will be reconfigured onto one level with possible people mover to terminals.
- **Maverick**—station upgrade to be completed late 1999
- **Aquarium**—tied to the Central Artery/Tunnel project, the top of the station will be the bottom of the Central Artery tunnel box and a new entrance added on State Street across Surface Artery
- **State Street**—possible new entrances in front of 60 State St. and Exchange Place (53 Congress St.)
- **Government Center**—new station entrances on Center Plaza and Government Center
- **Bowdoin**—station will be closed around 2000.



Metropolitan Highway System

The proposed 1994 Massachusetts Transportation Bond Bill (not yet enacted) calls for a "Metropolitan Highway System" (MHS) to be created. The MHS would be comprised of the Sumner and Callahan tunnels; Tobin Bridge; Massachusetts Turnpike extension (east of Route 128); and Central Artery/North Area (CANA); Third Harbor (Ted Williams) Tunnel; and depressed Central Artery when completed.

The financing, management and operation of the MHS would be under the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA), which would collect all tolls and pay all costs. The MTA would buy the Tobin Bridge from the Massachusetts Port Authority and pay the state portion of the design and construction costs of CANA, the Third Harbor Tunnel, and perhaps the Central Artery by floating bonds based on the MTA's own cash flow (no state obligation).

If the current version of the bill is enacted, tolls on the MassPike extension, tunnels and Tobin Bridge would have to be raised significantly, potentially diverting a lot of traffic to other routes. Tunnel tolls would be fixed at the January 1, 1993, level for residents of East Boston and the North End.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Fan Pier Activities
- MBTA Aquarium Station Design Changes
- North End's "Zuk Hill"

What's Up?

1 Amtrak and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have signed an agreement to cooperate on the **design of the North Station-South Station rail link**, using \$4 million appropriated by Congress. The State Transportation Bond Bill which has not been enacted provides up to \$60 million for design, environmental review and permitting. The funding cannot, however, exceed the federal funding for the same purpose (hence \$4 million to date).

2 The **New Northern Avenue Bridge**, as reported last month, is becoming the Massachusetts Highway Department's longest-running project. Now it seems that the bridge piers were designed by one designer to support steel, but another firm designed a concrete superstructure. And we're told that the reason the old bridge wasn't removed and the new bridge built in its place was due to the fact that the Highway Department felt the historic review process would take too long. That was in the early 1970s!

3 A new shuttle bus serving the **B. U. Medical Center** and **Boston City Hospital** is up and running. Funded in cooperation with the Massachusetts Transportation Management Association, the free "Midday Shuttle" picks riders up at Ruggles MBTA station (Orange Line) and Broadway (Red Line) between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and makes two stops in the hospitals area. The new service joins existing morning, afternoon and night shuttles. Information? Call the Interinstitutional Transportation Management Assn., 638-7430, ext. 87430.

Boston Edison now has a fleet of 12 electric cars—small, compact GEO Metro autos with a range of 130 miles to 150 miles before needing a 15-minute recharging. The price per car is about \$25,000 which includes retrofitting from an internal combustion vehicle. Massport is moving ahead with trial alternate fuel buses at Logan Airport, joining cities across the country experimenting with methane, propane, ethanol and other alternative fuels. General Motors recently announced that fuel cells could be built for electric cars for about the same cost as conventional engines.

Mayor Menino's new cabinet, a body of close advisors who oversee six cabinet offices, has been filled except for the Basic Services cabinet position. Despite its somewhat vague title, Basic Services includes several high-profile departments including Transportation, Public Works and Parks and Recreation. The chief economic development officer, Marisa Lago, oversees similarly high-profile departments including the Boston Redevelopment Authority, Public Facilities, Environment Department and EDIC.

The **federal government's reproof of Central Artery/Tunnel project spending** made the national news. One finding made by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation's inspector general was that intensive lobbying for the project "overwhelmed" technical concerns and federal objections. A suggestion to control costs is to cap the federal share after the existing authorization at 50 percent instead of 85 percent. Any change in the funding formula for the project as a whole or on individual parts would throw the responsibility for the rest of the funding on the already-strapped state.

People Movers: **Phil Caruso**, Sverdrup Corp., to Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff; **Mary Nee**, Public Facilities Dept., to The United Way; **Susan Sloan-Rossiter**, Boston Transportation Dept., to Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc.; **Paul Reavis**, **Larry Koff**, **Mark Webb**, **Sandy Swaile**, **Gary Brown** and others from the Boston Redevelopment Authority to other ventures.

What They're Saying

"The reporter, on her first visit, commented that **Seattle** seems like such a nice city, why are you tearing it down?"

Charles Royer, former mayor of Seattle, on reactions to construction of an underground bus tunnel downtown

"Employment was the anesthesia for this project. Now the anesthesia is wearing off."

John White, East Boston, on the Central Artery/Tunnel project

"Where is my seat at the table?"

Rosemary Ruggerio, East Boston activist, on the lack of community representation at The Boston Conference

The utility relocation plans in the **Harbor Towers** and **New England Aquarium** area (contract C14C4) have been revised. A Notice of Project Change filed with the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs describes the changes which will greatly reduce impacts on the Harbor Towers and the New England Aquarium by realigning the biggest utilities—water and sewer lines—along Atlantic Avenue instead of down East India Row and across the Aquarium plaza. The remaining utilities will be placed in a trench eight feet wide by about eight feet deep instead of a trench 20 feet wide by 30 feet deep.

As a result the construction time will be shortened from 27 months to 15 months and allows better access to Harbor Towers and the Aquarium. The changes also alleviate concerns about potential damage to buildings and water table shifts and do not block possible Aquarium expansion plans for an underground garage.

Plans for the **Surface Artery** after the **Central Artery** is depressed show an eight-to-ten foot high "hill" located in the vicinity of North and Hanover streets. Never publicly explained, "Zuk Hill," named for Peter Zuk, director of the Central Artery/Tunnel project, is reportedly caused by the limited headroom for on/off connections from the Sumner and Callahan tunnels to the depressed artery.

The **MBTA's Aquarium station modernization project** plans have had several changes. Plans to upgrade the station include extending the platform across the Surface Artery and creating a new west entrance. After many alternatives, the MBTA has decided to build a station inside Marketplace Center (200 State St.). There will also be entrance/exit stairs across State Street at the State Street Block.

In addition, the existing station entrance at the Marriott Hotel will be demolished and replaced with two smaller structures, one with the main entrance/exit and the second containing the elevator and exhaust ducts. Finally, the MBTA decided to locate a substation on Chatham Street next to Quincy Market. The substation is an integral part of the project that will allow the MBTA to run six-car instead of four-car trains.

Site preparation work on the Fan Pier for the New Federal Courthouse has begun. The Courthouse is scheduled to open in 1997. Work has also started on the 4,400-seat open-air **music pavilion** on the Fan Pier with plans to start concerts this summer and holding up to 40 concerts per season.

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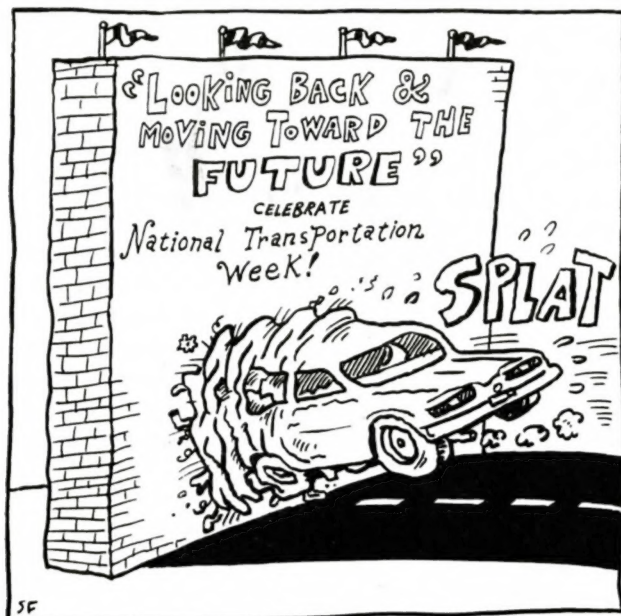
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"CATCHY PHRASE"

You were asking...

- Q. I've heard the Kennedy School of Government published a report on the politics of the Central Artery project. How can I get a copy?**
- A. Written by David Luberoff, Alan Altshuler and Christie Baxter, "Mega-Project" explores the history behind the early (Dukakis-Salvucci) years trying to get approvals for the Central Artery/Tunnel project. Send a check for \$10 to the Taubman Publications Unit, JFK School of Govt., 79 JFK St., Cambridge, MA 02138.
- Q. Where is the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) in Mayor Menino's cabinet?**
- A. Under the chief economic development officer (Marisa Lago), the BRA is cutting one-third of its employees as it is recast as the city's planning agency, not its planning and redevelopment agency. Former BRA head Ed Logue gave the BRA redevelopment powers, including eminent domain, in 1960.
- Q. I read in the NETI study that there are 600 airports in New England. Is this right?**
- A. The New England Transportation Initiative (NETI) for the six-states stated in an interim report on existing transportation facilities that there are 600 airports, but Logan Airport accounts for 61 percent of all New England enplanements, and the top seven New England airports account for 95 percent.

The Boston Informer

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